

Town of Freedom Select Board Minutes
December 7, 2020

Present: Cindy Abbott, Steve Bennett, Travis Price, Ron Price, Alyssa Brugger, Elaine Higgins, Palmer Pearson, Dylan Turner, April Turner, Joe Freeman, Jim Waterman, Nathan McCann, Laura Greeley and Amanda Jamison

Meeting began at 6:02pm. Ron wanted to mark that today is Pearl Harbor today.

FVFD: Jim Waterman let people know that a Freedom Volunteer Firefighter tested positive for Covid-19. The fire department will be adhering to social distancing and masking.

Public Works: Travis said last week the solid waste tonnage for Freedom was 3.3 tons, which is more than most weeks. Joe had to go to the landfill after Freedom's trash run. Montville's trash disposal last week was low. Often when one week of trash is light the next is heavy. So if both towns ship together up to 7 tons, that is a lot for the truck. Travis let Alyssa know that is why there are two slips this week.

Travis stated that he would like to make sure some items are highlighted on the winter road policy mailing. Travis would like to add, "not plowing into the entrance of culverts". Ron said that guideline is highlighted in the mailing. Travis also wanted to make sure that the guideline "Do not park vehicles in the road" be more specific. The Select Board will add "especially during storms". Ron will write this up and get it to Cindy. Cindy said a mailing is going out to let people know about nominations coming up. Travis reported that the storm on 12/5 was a rough storm that plowed hard. Public Works put in a lot of hours, and they did not have any major breakdowns.

Citizen's Issues: None received.

Treasurer's Report: Alyssa reported that this week's Payroll Warrant is in the amount of \$11,279.77. The AP Warrant is in the amount of \$4,512.82. The ending checkbook balance is in the amount of \$410,538.00. Alyssa reported that checks were received from Knox reimbursement, November rent for the Post Office, LRAP funds and Black Hills.

Alyssa asked does the S.B. want her to do both the November and December school payment? Steve suggested paying just November payment next week. Ron and Elaine agreed.

Dec. 20 and 21st she'll be out of town. She will have the warrants done and leave them with Cindy or Erna. Alyssa will be back the 22nd. Alyssa will process payroll on Saturday, December 19th that week.

There is an expense of \$88.00 on warrant for working remote. This is a payment for Alyssa and Cindy to work remotely.

Steve made a motion to accept the AP Warrant in the amount of \$4,512.82 and the Payroll Warrant in the amount of \$11,279.77. Elaine 2nd. Unanimous.

Committee Reports:

Budget Committee – Steve reported that the committee had a good meeting last week. He said the last part of the budget to look at is the fire department budget. After that, the Committee will review the budget. Steve did see a bill from the Humane Society, and it looks like we are over budget. Alyssa will look into it. Amended minutes to reflect that Alyssa determined that the Town paid 5 quarterly payments instead of 4 in 2020. One of those payments will be applied to 2021, therefore, the Town will pay 3 quarterly payments in 2021.

Internet Committee - Elaine gave an update that the Internet Committee has a name, it is Southern Waldo County Broadband Coalition. The next meeting is Wednesday 12/9 at 6pm. The committee applied for a \$5,000 Connect ME grant that was awarded.

Recreation Committee - Alyssa reported that there will be a decorating contest and stocking decorating. The committee wants to add the information to the upcoming town mailing.

Trash Truck: Joe Freeman reported that last week he picked up a total of 320 bags of garbage from Freedom residents. Of those 320 bags, 237 were 30 gallon bags, 83 of them were 55 gallon bags. He had to go to the landfill that day b/c he picked up 3 ¾ tons of trash from Freedom. On Saturday after picking up Montville's trash he did not have to go to the landfill, because there was not that much trash from Montville that day, so he will go to the landfill after picking up Freedom's trash this coming Thursday.

Trash Stickers: Elaine brought up previous week's discussion on changing the pricing of throwing away 55 gallon trash bags with two \$1.50 trash stickers. Steve said this issue was discussed at the Budget Committee. He felt it was unanimous that the committee supported this idea of two stickers / 55 gallon bag. Discussion continued about returning to just allowing 30 gallon bags. Ron thought town's people would not like this. Laura suggested that the town should use a colored trash bag that has to be purchased at the Town Office. Ron doesn't want Joe picking up things that are too heavy for him and some of the 55 gallon trash bags are filled. Cindy said that when Sullivan's picked up the trash, used to have to put two stickers on a 55 gallon bag. Steve said why can't we change the pricing midstream? Why do we have to wait for the next Town Meeting, but instead change it January 1st? Nathan McCann said that Steve said that there was no shortfall in the budget. Nathan didn't understand why this is necessary if the cost of trash stickers is already covering the cost. Why does the price have to be raised? Steve said there was no shortfall in the budget, but that doesn't mean that our budget is way over the top. Steve continued to say that Freedom's contract with Montville has the potential of unforeseen expenses to keep the equipment running. Steve thought it is a matter of fairness. Nathan said if this is about fairness, shouldn't the town get to decide on this? Nathan continued that this is a difficult time during Covid and some people have lost their jobs, why charge townspeople more? Laura said she agrees with Nathan. Laura said that during the Budget Committee last week she did not feel it was unanimous to change the pricing on trash. She added that Tim Biggs had said that we charge to dispose of trash to encourage recycling. Ron said every penny that the town brings in goes toward paying the Town's expenses. If it makes a little money, we can use it to pave a road or some other expense. Currently we don't have enough money in our general fund to carry us over until money comes in, so the town has to take out a Tan to borrow money, which incurs interest that the Town has to pay.

It was reported that Montville is still using the Town's recycling trailer.

Old Business: Steve asked if anyone got a chance to look at shed on Greeley Road? Elaine and Ron had not. Ron said this has been mentioned to Jacki Robbins, and she will take a look.

Laura mentioned about the subdivision on Greeley Road. Ron said Jacki has been there three or four times and they have met all the requirements required by our building code.

April Turner raised the question if there is a weight lifting requirement for town employees? Ron said there are no statute limits in our town policy. We are subject to the State of Maine Bureau of Labor standards. Ron said that if Joe Freeman gets to a point where he is by himself and a bag of garbage is too heavy, he should not pick it up. Ron trusts that Joe knows that.

Cindy: She sent emails to Jacki about abatement for Palmer Pearson for tonight's meeting. Jacki has not gotten to it yet. Cindy does have Supplemental for Palmer Pearson – it's the homestead on the property. Ron said that the SB decided if he didn't qualify for it, then he should be supplemented for it. Ron made a motion to put a supplemental tax bill for Palmer Pearson for the homestead exemption he got that he wasn't qualified for. Steve 2nd. Unanimous.

Palmer Pearson asked about the abatement for a building that was moved off the property. Cindy said that was approved by Jacki for the small building that had been taken off the property. Cindy said Jacki needs to send that abatement to Cindy, but haven't received anything from Jacki yet. Ron said that Jacki would come back and look at Palmer's other tax question concerning how the big building on his property is assessed. Ron said Jacki has not had a chance to look at it. She needs to look at it before an abatement can happen. Cindy said once she receives the abatement forms from Jacki, Alyssa would send him a check to refund him.

Cindy has nomination papers ready and asked what the Select Board plans to do about the Town Meeting. Ron said he needs to call MMA for clarification. He thinks the Town can have secret election like always but delay the town meeting until we can have a meeting in a venue where we can stay safe like the sand/salt shed. Steve agrees with Ron. Steve asked about what do you do about a budget if you can't have a town meeting until a later date? Elaine said the Governor said the towns could go on what they did the previous year. Cindy said a call needs to be made to MMA, so that the Town can notify the town's people what the plan is at this point. Ron said he would call tomorrow and report back tomorrow in an email. Cindy said that nomination papers need to be ready by Monday, December 14th.

Cindy asked the Select Board about the plan for doing business during the winter months. She reported that one person slipped on snow coming to the window today. Ron said that the person that shovels should take care of this. Ron thought we should have a bucket of sand out where the lawnmower is. Cindy wanted to know what the plan is about opening the office back up. Ron said currently there is no plan to open the Town Office up for walk-ins. Laura said what about installing plexiglass and only allow one person at a time. Laura said there are plenty of precautions and orders from the Governor that we could follow. It was left that there is no plan to open the Town Office at this time.

Steve made motion to accept minutes as amended. Elaine 2nd. Unanimous.

Trash Sticker: Ron made a motion to change price of disposing of a 55 gallon bag to 2 stickers at \$1.50 each effective January 7th, 2021. Steve 2nd. Unanimous.

Steve made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:25pm. Elaine 2nd.